produce 20,000 cars. Commercial production is anticipated to commence by July, 1996. (iii) The joint venture will have 51% equity participation by M/s. Daimler Benz and the balance 49% will be contributed by M/s. TELCO. (iv) There will be no production of engines in 1994-95 as the Joint venture will take up only assembly of cars from semi-knock down kits supplied by M/s. Mercedes Benz.

Duping of investors by M/s. Eassy Agro and Fish Farms

3551. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDEY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that several advertisements are appearing in the press by investors in the Agro-Sector for planting more trees and earning huge amount of money by way of returns;

(b) whether it is also a fact that M/s. Agro and Fish Farms have duped hundred of investors and have been arrested by Delhi Police; and

(c) if so, what regulations Government is bringing to curb this kind of cheating?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Pesticide contamination affecting export of food items

3552. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the serious concern expressed on the consumption of pesticide contaminated foods both of plant and animal origin;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in the West, where our farm products including spices, tea, coffee, tobacco, fruit, vegetables and other products are exported there is awareness and resistance to consumption of pesticide contaminated products; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that exports of various items especially tea and rice have been affected; and if so, details of the decrese in exports of various items including cotton and fibres on this account and corrective steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. There is growing concern on consumption of pesticide contaminated foods in developed countries.

It is not correct to say that exports of tea, rice, cotton etc. have declined due to increasing concern about pesticides contamination. Overall exports of agricultural commodities have been steadily increasing.

Commodity Boards, Export Promotion Councils and Export Inspection Agencies have been organising educational programmes disseminating necessary information on the subject providing analytical and technical support to growers, processors and exporters and also taking up awareness programmes through audio-visual media.

Representations from exporters for getting steel from domestic manufacturers

3553. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently received representations from exporters to allow them to get steel from domestic manufacturers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government have taken/ propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Upto 31.3.94, certain varieties of iron and steel raw materials were available to exporters of engineering goods at international prices under the International Price Reimbursement Scheme (IPRS). With the withdrawal of IPRS for shipments made with effect from 1.4.94, exporters have been requesting for alternative arrangements for supply of iron and steel raw materials at international prices for export production.

(c) While the facility of duty free import of steel raw material is already available to the exporters of engineering goods under Duty Exemption Scheme, the Government has been continuing its efforts to find other alternatives for supply of iron and steel raw materials at near international prices.

Indian Biodiversity Patented in Foreign Countries

3554. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that elements of Indian biodiversity are already being patented in foreign countries which is legal as per GATT agreement;

(b) whether Government have ensured that the benefits from these micro organisms will come into the country from where the originated; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government does not maintain information on patents granted in foreign countries.

(b) and (c) Collection of micro-organisms from India does not at present require the consent of Government. However, India has signed the Convention on Biodiversity which provides inter alia that the source of the genetic resource shall share in the proceeds of the research done on that resource and in the patent if any given to the results of the research. Government is in the process of devising legislation for the conservation of biological diversity in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Import of Seeds

3555. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a considerable improvement in the import of various seeds on account of liberalisation policy and if so, the details of seeds imported indicating countries of origin, value and type of seeds indicating the yields expected and the highest yield seeds already available in the country; and

(b) whether any new or exotic pests have also been imported alongwith the seeds and if so, the details thereof in view of earlier experience with P.L. 480 wheat indicating whether any responsibility has been fixed and corrective steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There has been a considerable improvement in the import of various seeds since 1991-92 as compared to preceding years. The quantity of seeds imported during 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 was 428.390 metric tons, 148.082 metric tons and 1645.987 metric tons respectively.

Seeds of Sunflower, other Oilseeds, Vegetables like Cabbage, Cauliflower, Tomato, ornamental plants, watermelon and Coarse Cereals have been imported